‘An old friend in a foreign land’

‘An old friend in a foreign land’: Walter Scott, *Götz von Berlichingen*, and Drama Between Cultures

Michael Wood, University of Edinburgh

Walter Scott’s translations of German plays are largely seen as expressing his interest in medieval themes and the historical individual, and as linguistically deficient works that aided the young man in his artistic development. But his translation of Götz von Berlichingen *shows that Scott emphasizes the commonalities between German and British culture: in foregrounding the influence of Shakespeare on Goethe and drawing analogies between German and British historical customs, Scott points his readers towards the familiarity of the foreign culture. Following in Lessing’s footsteps, Scott uses cultural similarity in dramatic texts to drive appreciation for another culture and the development of his own.*

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The discovery of the works of William Shakespeare in the German-speaking world illustrates the significance of drama for both the understanding of another culture and the improvement of one’s own. That is not to say that foreign literary traditions are always helpful. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing writes in the seventeenth of the *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend* (1759–66), for example, that Johann Christoph Gottsched’s use of French neo-classical Aristotelianism as a model for reforming German drama had led to ‘wahre

Verschlimmerungen' in the latter.[1] Comparing Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine with Shakespeare in the same letter, however, Lessing finds two compelling reasons for adopting this English model:

> Erstlich würde das Volk an jenem weit mehr Geschmack gefunden haben, als es an diesen nicht finden kann; und zweytens würde jener ganz andere Köpfe unter uns erweckt haben, als man von diesen zu rühmen weiß. Denn ein *Genie* kann nur von einem *Genie* entzündet werden, und am leichtesten von so einem, das alles bloß der Natur zu danken haben scheinet, und durch die mühsamen Vollkommenheiten der Kunst nicht abschrecket.[2]

In Lessing's eyes, Shakespeare offers two things. For one, his plays will be more suited to German taste, having more in common with older German plays than Gottsched's Francophile productions did, even if the latter's model was indeed English, as in the case of Gottsched's *Sterbender Cato* (1732), based on Joseph Addison's *Cato, A Tragedy* (1712).[3] Moreover, Shakespeare serves as an example of creative genius, unrestrained by the formal rules of drama, whom German writers might emulate. At one and the same time, Lessing points to a historical commonality between German-speaking and English culture and suggests that adopting the model offered by this cultural proximity will help improve German letters. Judging by the responses of Goethe, Herder, Klinger, and Lenz – amongst others – to

[1] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 'Siebzehnter Brief [Den 16. Februar 1759]', in *Gotthold Ephraim Lessings Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Karl Lachmann, 3rd ed. by Franz Muncker, 23 vols (Stuttgart: Göschen, 1886–1924), VIII, 41–44 (p. 41).

[2] Ibid., p. 43. Emphasis in the original.

[3] Ibid., pp. 43–44.

the works of Shakespeare in the 1760s and 70s and well beyond into the twenty-first century, Lessing's prophecy seems to have been fulfilled.

Shakespeare's place in eighteenth-century German culture is well established.[4] It is, however, important to note for a number of reasons. The reception of Shakespeare not only provided a model for dramatic writing that contained within it the seeds of a future for German literature and thought; it also furnished the generation that was to drive the development of German culture with an impression of English creative *Geist* and powered an interest in British literature as the product of a similar people.[5] Yet one intriguing result of this was that it aided in attempts to understand and appreciate German culture in Britain not long after. Walter Scott's translation of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), undertaken in 1798, provides an example of one response to German letters in Britain that shares much

[4] See, for example, Günther Erken, 'Deutschland', in *Shakespeare-Handbuch: Die Zeit—Der Mensch—Das Werk—Die Nachwelt*, ed. by Ina Schabert, 4th edn. (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2000), pp. 635–60 (pp. 635–49); Roy Pascal, *The German Sturm und Drang* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), pp. 233–95; Roger Paulin, *The Critical Reception of Shakespeare in Germany 1682–1914: Native Literature and Foreign Genius* (Hildesheim and New York: Olms, 2003); and *Shakespeare im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Roger Paulin (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2007).

[5] English-language works had already been making their way in to the German-speaking world, covering everything from philosophy to *belles lettres*. For some recent publications on this topic, see, for example, Martin Munke, 'Philipp Erasmus Reich und die Verbrietung britischer Literatur in Deutschland. Import und Übersetzung', in *Britisch-deutscher Literaturtransfer 1756–1832*, ed. by Lore Knapp and Eike Kronshage (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), pp. 21–38; and Jennifer Willenberg, *Distribution und Übersetzung englischen Schrifttums im Deutschland des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008).

with the German reception of Shakespeare amongst Lessing and the *Stürmer und Dränger* only a few decades before. Scott's interest in *Götz von Berlichingen* was undoubtedly grabbed by the play's depiction of historical customs and its treatment of the individual in times of historical upheaval.[6] A closer look at Scott's translation of *Götz*, however, illustrates his drive to get to know a foreign culture, coupled with an ambition to emphasize its similarities to his own. Executed during a period in the late 1790s during which, in his own words, Scott was 'German-mad',[7] it demonstrates his awareness of the role of the translator in mediating between cultures. Scott's translation of *Götz* contains strategies geared towards

[6] See, for example, Christopher Johnson, 'Scott and the German Historical Drama', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 233 (1996), 2–36; Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin, 1962), p. 22; William Macintosh, *Scott and Goethe: German Influence on the Writings of Sir Walter Scott* (Galashiels: A. Walker & Son, [1925]), p. 19; Duncan Mennie, 'Walter Scott's Unpublished Translations of German Plays, *Modern Language Review*, 33 (1938), 234–39 (pp. 238–39); G.H. Needler, *Goethe and Scott* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 22; Paul M. Ochojski, 'Sir Walter Scott's Continuous Interest in Germany', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 3 (1966), 164–73 (p. 166); Paul M. Ochojski, *Walter Scott and Germany: A Study in Literary Cross-Currents* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1960), pp. 39–62; Frauke Reitemeier, *Deutsch-englische Literaturbeziehungen: Der historische Roman Sir Walter Scotts und seine deutschen Vorläufer* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001), p. 240; and Frank W. Stokoe, *German Influence in the English Romantic Period 1788–1818, with Special Reference to Scott, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), p. 71.

[7] Walter Scott to Mrs Hughes, Edinburgh, 13 December 1827, in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by Herbert Grierson, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932–37), X (1936), 330–34 (p. 331).

aligning this foreign cultural good with the work of Shakespeare and making the historical circumstances and curiosities of Götz von Berlichingen's time appear to be not quite so alien for a British readership.

Before turning to Scott's treatment of Goethe's play, it is worth noting that Scott's positive appraisal of the 'German' character was partially at odds with that of many of his contemporaries. Published accounts of the German character tended to signal its difference from the character and disposition of the British, due to the former's lack of wit and excessive sensibility.[8] Conservative critics in particular saw German drama as an abhorrent art form whose formal degeneracy was a symptom of German moral depravity that threatened to corrupt British theatregoers.[9] Yet Scott's alignment of German and British culture stands to reason, given that the beginnings of his interest in German drama lie in Henry Mackenzie's 'Account of the German Theatre', delivered to the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 21 April 1788. Mackenzie is better known as the author of sentimental novels such as *The Man of Feeling* (1771), and his role in the popular dissemination of German drama in Britain comes

[8] Compare, for example, Anon., 'General Character of the Germans', *The Scots Magazine; or, Literary Miscellany*, 57 (December 1795), 53–54; and Anon., 'Remarks on the German Character and on Some Eminent German Authors', *The Scots Magazine; or, Literary Miscellany*, 60 (April 1798), 247–49.

[9] See, for example, Anon., 'Remarkable Effect produced by the Representation of a Tragedy in Germany', *The Edinburgh Magazine; or, Literary Miscellany*, 6, 34 (October 1787), 225–27; Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols (London: Cadell & Davies, 1799), I, 48; and William Preston, 'Reflections on the Peculiarities of Style and Manner in the late German Writers whose Works have appeared in English, and on the Tendency of their Productions', *The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, 8 (1902), 15–79.

second to that of Thomas Holcroft's adaptation of *Der Gasthof, oder Trau, schau, wem!* (1767) by Johann Christian Brandes, performed in London as *The German Hotel* in 1790.[10] Nevertheless, the impression left on the young Scott by Mackenzie's discussion of recent German plays – based on those found in two French anthologies –[11] should not be underestimated. Having already adapted a number of ballads by Goethe and Gottfried August Bürger, between 1796 and 1798 Scott translated six recent German plays. While his translation of *Götz* was published in London in 1799, his translations of August Wilhelm Iffland's *Die Mündel* (1784), Jacob Maier's *Fust von Stromberg* (1782) and Karl Franz Guolfinger von Steinsberg's adaptation of Joseph Marius von Babo's *Otto von Wittelsbach* (1782) still only exist as unpublished manuscripts. His translation of Schiller's *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua* (1783) was 'given away or lost',[12] and there is no further mention of his translation of Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* (1771) after 1798.[13] Mackenzie's lecture did not, however, merely introduce Scott to German drama – and particularly to *Götz*,

[10] Theodore Grieder, 'The German Drama in England, 1790–1800', *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research*, 3 (1964), 39–50 (p. 39).

[11] These anthologies are: *Théâtre Allemand, ou recueil des meilleures pieces dramatiques, Tant anciennes que modernes, qui ont paru en langue Allemande; précédé d'une Dissertation sur l'Origine, les Progrés & l'état actuel de la Poésie Théâtrale en Allemagne*, trans. and ed. by Georges Adam Junker and [?] Liebault, 4 vols (Paris: Junker, Durand, Coulturier, 1785), originally published in 1772; and *Nouveau Théatre Allemand, ou Recueil des pieces qui ont paru avec succès sur les Théatres des Capitales de l'Allemagne*, trans. and ed. by Adrien Chrétien Friedel and Nicolas de Bonneville, 12 vols (Paris: Caron, 1782–85).

[12] Scott to Hughes, 13 December 1827, p. 331.

[13] See Walter Scott to Messrs Cadell and Davies, Edinburgh 5 May 1798, printed in Ruth M. Adams, 'A Letter by Sir Walter Scott', *Modern Philology*, 54 (1956), 121–23 (p. 121).

Emilia Galotti, and *Die Räuber* –; it signalled cultural similarities between Germans and Britons that could be seen through dramatic form. Mackenzie demonstrates how German playwrights largely reject the three Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action,[14] and violate classical decorum in presenting and eliciting the passions. Unlike neo-classical tragedy, German theatre does not permit 'delicacy of feeling'; for Mackenzie, the impassioned nature of the language and actions in German drama illustrates a correspondence with the 'national character' of Germans, 'which, like that of the English, is of an ardent, thinking, serious cast.'[15] As Mackenzie states, 'the sentiment these plays exhibit, is not the nice and delicate feeling of the *petites morales*, or manner; it is that deep impassioned sensibility, which resides in serious and ardent minds, which can brood with melancholy, or kindle with enthusiasm.'[16] Emphasizing the similarities between German and English dispositions, Mackenzie pits French delicacy against German sensibility; he solidifies the comparison by positioning Shakespeare as the 'favourite author' and foremost influence on German dramatists.[17] Scott comments in his 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad' in 1830 that Mackenzie's lecture showed him the connections between German playwrights and

[14] See Henry Mackenzie, 'Account of the German Theatre', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, 2 (1790), 154–92 (pp. 163–66).

[15] Ibid., p. 168. It is worth noting that while Mackenzie was a Scotsman and delivered his lecture to a primarily Scottish audience he consistently uses the term 'English' throughout his lecture when referring to the inhabitants of present-day Britain and Ireland. In trying to secure London-based publishers for his translations in the 1790s, it is clear that Scott seeks to transcend the boundaries of a purely Scottish or English readership, and further sources illustrate his use of the terms 'Britons' and 'British' at this time.

[16] Ibid., p. 169.

[17] Ibid.

Shakespeare. Scott himself credits Shakespeare with helping German dramatists cast off of the 'pedantry of the unities', giving 'free scope to the genius of Goethé [*sic*], Schiller, and others'.[18]

When Scott was reading and translating German plays in 1796–98, he was doing so with the impression that the Germans whose works he was reading had much in common with himself. Goethe's first play wears the influence of Shakespeare on its sleeve, and that Scott was drawn to *Götz* by this resemblance is eminently clear.[19] Indeed, the 'radikale[s] Shakespearisieren' of *Götz* consists to no small extent in the playwright's rejection of neo-classical Aristotelianism,[20] and Goethe makes his disregard for generic classifications all the more plain by labelling *Götz* a *Schauspiel*.[21] In stark contrast to classical drama, Goethe's

[18] Walter Scott, 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad', in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1849), IV, 3–78 (p. 39).

[19] See Wilman Brewer, *Shakespeare's Influence on Sir Walter Scott* (Boston, MA: Cornhill, 1925), pp. 20–24; Arthur Melville Clark, *Sir Walter Scott: the Formative Years* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1969), pp. 259–60; and Christopher Worth, '"A very nice Theatre at Edinr.": Sir Walter Scott and Control of the Theatre Royal', *Theatre Research International*, 17 (1992), 86–95 (p. 86).

[20] Andreas Huyssen, *Drama des Sturm und Drang. Kommentar zu einer Epoche* (Munich: Winter, 1980), p. 93.

[21] See F.J. Lamport, *German Classical Drama: Theatre, Humanity and Nation 1750-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 40; Id., 'The Charismatic Hero: Goethe, Schiller, and the Tragedy of Character', *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 58 (1989), 62-83; and Lesley Sharpe, 'The Young Dramatist', in *Friedrich Schiller: Playwright, Poet, Philosopher, Historian*, ed. by Paul E. Kerry (Oxford et al.: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 95–116 (p. 97).

large cast are drawn from all ranks of society and speak in various registers; this aspect of *Götz* was to leave its mark on Scott's ballads and novels. Then again, as Scott was aware from Mackenzie's lecture, *Götz* 'goes beyond the utmost licence of our Shakespeare, in its change of scene and multiplicity of incident.'[22] Goethe's rejection of the unities and development of a larger, symmetrical structure for the play[23] are his response to the creative genius he found in Shakespeare.[24] Unfettered by the rules of French dramatic composition, Goethe succeeds in depicting human nature in times of historical upheaval.

Scott's preface to his translation of *Götz* illustrates that he had recognized some limits to Goethe's Shakespeareanism. Scott notes that while *Götz* 'was written […] in imitation, it is said, of the manner of Shakespeare', the 'resemblance is not to be looked for in the style or expression, but in the outline of the characters, and mode of conducting the incidents of the piece.'[25] He rightly identifies that it is not Shakespeare's language or register that Goethe reproduces, but the episodic structure and disunity of character. Goethe's Götz, for instance, is not a simple emblematic figure who remains static, but a passionate character who is

[22] Mackenzie, 'Account', p. 160.

[23] See Frank M. Fowler, 'Regularity Without Rules: The Formal Structure of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*', *German Life and Letters*, 41 (1987), 1–8; and Arlene Akiko Teraoka, 'Submerged Symmetry and Surface Chaos: The Structure of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*', *Goethe Yearbook*, 2 (1984), 13–41.

[24] See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Zum Shäkespears Tag', in *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens. Münchner Ausgabe*, ed. by Karl Richter et al., 21 vols (Munich: Hanser, 1985-99), I.2 (1987), 411–14.

[25] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goetz of Berlichingen, with the Iron Hand: A tragedy*, trans. by Walter Scott (London: Bell, 1799), p. xii, hereafter referred to in the body of the text in parentheses with the abbreviation '*Goetz*'.

thrown into a situation that makes it difficult to be so (much like Henry 'Hotspur' Percy in *Henry IV Part I*), leading to his eventual demise. Mackenzie's lecture had provided the groundwork for viewing Götz in this way, describing German plays as 'plays of situation, rather than of character.'[26] If Scott believed that Goethe's play followed Shakespeare's method of structuring the events of a drama, then exercising any form of editorial license in altering stage directions or the sequence of scenes might detract from the Shakespearean character of *Götz*. The third act, composed of twenty-three short scenes in varying settings, therefore stays intact. But elsewhere Scott edits the structure of the text to compensate for some of its seeming shortcomings. Whereas Goethe finishes Act II with the 'Bauernhochzeit', Scott inverts the order of the final three scenes of this act. In Scott's *Goetz*, the 'Bauernhochzeit' is followed by Weislingen's declaration of love for Adelheid (Adela in Scott's translation) and the act finishes with Georg and Selbitz presenting Götz with the news of Weislingen's betrayal of Götz and his betrothed, Maria (*Goetz*, 79–91).[27] Goethe closes Act II with the peasant's complaints to Götz of Imperial, institutional extortion and Götz's

[26] Mackenzie, 'Account', p. 163.

[27] Compare with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Götz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand*, in *Goethe's Schriften*, 8 vols (Leipzig: Göschen, 1787–89), II, 1–240 (pp. 97–112), hereafter referred to in the body of the text in parentheses with the abbreviation '*Götz*'. There are a number of indicators in Scott's translation that it is based on the version of *Götz* published in this edition of Goethe's works. Moreover, this edition was acquired by the library of the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh in 1796 and can be found amongst Scott's collection in the library at Abbotsford. See *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1838), p. 51. For an account of changes in editions of *Götz von Berlichingen*, see Steffan Davies, 'Goethe, Theatre and Politics: *Götz von Berlichingen* from 1771 to 1804', *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 70 (2000), 29–45.

conviction that an audience with the Emperor will see justice done. It therefore sets up a conceptual connection with the first scene of Act III: state-sanctioned extortion is contrasted with Götz's private raid on two merchants, the latter of which causes a war that is to prove Götz's undoing. This form of editorial work is absent in Scott's translations of *Die Mündel*, *Fust von Stromberg*, and *Otto von Wittelsbach*. We might assume that Scott regarded it as a necessary dramatic irony to reveal the full extent of Weislingen's betrayal to the audience before this is made clear to Götz. Goethe's *Götz* foregrounds the conditions of the historical situation under which Götz's character is being tested. The chain of events in Scott's *Goetz*, however, prioritizes intrigue and the advancement of the plot: directly after the revelation of Weislingen's treachery, we see him at the Emperor's side precisely when the latter decides to deal firmly with Götz. This ordering of the scenes in Scott's version has more in common with Shakespeare's methods for developing action than Goethe's play does.

Scott's changing the order of scenes in his translation of *Götz* is a move towards 'acculturating' Goethe for a British audience, making *Götz* more likely to sit comfortably with prevailing aesthetic and cultural norms in Britain at the time.[28] Yet if this were the aim, we might expect Scott to have done more in editing *Götz*. The language into which he renders Goethe's text is, in this respect, curious. In the preface to his translation, Scott claims that '[l]iteral accuracy has been less studied in the translation, than an attempt to convey the spirit and general effect of the piece' (*Goetz*, xii). Scott's translation includes a number of what George Needler calls 'school-boy "howlers"' arising from basic errors of vocab, idiom, and misreading Fraktur,[29] and bears some traces of being inattentive to meaning in a rush to

[28] For an example of the use of the term in translation studies, see André Lefevre, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature', *Modern Language Studies*, 12 (1982), 3–20.

[29] See Needler, *Goethe and Scott*, pp. 26–28.

complete the translation.[30] Talk of rats nibbling at the Emperor's 'Besitzthümer' (*Götz*, 160) in Goethe's original becomes 'while the rats gnaw his parchment edicts' (*Goetz*, 132) in Scott's translation. This makes little sense: Götz is contrasting his relatively petty felony with the intrigues depriving the Emperor of his own imperial lands and titles. We even find Scott coining unintelligible and inelegant terms in replicating the German. The landlord's declaration to Sievers at the beginning of *Götz*, 'Du bist der Nimmersatt' (*Götz*, 5), for example, becomes 'Thou art a Never-enough' in Scott's version (*Goetz*, 1). Some of Scott's solutions are imaginative while missing the meaning of Goethe's German. In Act II, for example, Adelheid shrugs off Weislingen's talk of the duties of chivalry, saying: 'Erzählt das Mädchen, die den Theuerdank lesen, und sich so einen Mann wünschen' (*Götz*, 92); Adelheid mocks the romanticised image of chivalric love offered in Emperor Maximilian I's *Theuerdank* (first published in 1517). In Scott's translation, however, 'Talk of that to some forsaken damsel whose Corydon has proved forsworn' (*Goetz*, 75) fudges the meaning of Adelheid's statement: its reference to Corydon's cowardice – when faced with a choice between saving Pastorell from a tiger or simply running away – in Book VI, Canto X of *The Fairie Queene* modulates Adelheid's scepticism into outright disbelief.

Peter Mortensen argues that Scott's language intentionally foreignizes the English, inserting unintelligible expressions, unidiomatic syntax, and archaisms to turn Goethe's politically provocative text into a foreign depiction of historic customs.[31] Yet the cases of clumsy wording and syntax in Scott's translation are few and far between, and his language is rarely archaic. At least, there is an insufficient amount of the above in the work as a whole to

[30] See John Koch, 'Sir Walter Scotts Beziehungen zu Deutschland. II', *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift*, 15 (1927), 117–41 (p. 121).

[31] Peter Mortensen, *British Romanticism and Continental Influences: Writing in an Age of Europhobia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 143–50.

subscribe to Mortensen's conclusion. Then again, while archaic language features in Scott's translation, he is inconsistent in using it. Within individual dialogues, characters slip between modern and Elizabethan or Jacobean English. In the third scene of Act I, for example, Götz brings Weislingen back to Jagsthausen as a prisoner and the two reminisce about their former friendship. Götz begins in contemporary English: 'We'll take a glass till dinner is ready. Come, sit down – think yourself at home! Consider you are once more the guest of Goetz. […] Does it displease you?' (*Goetz*, 33). Barely a few lines later and within the same conversational tone and register, Götz's language changes: 'Hadst thou followed me when I wished thee to go to Brabant with me'; 'Art thou not as free and as noble born as any in Germany […] and dost thou not crouch amongst vassals?'; 'What canst thou say?' (*Goetz*, 34–35). This is only one of the many cases in which Scott's dialogue exhibits temporal shifts following no consistent pattern and without any such shifts occurring in Goethe's German (*Götz*, 39–43).

Scott's occasional lapse into imitating Elizabethan or Jacobean English is reinforced by occasional direct appeals to Shakespeare's diction. The landlord's exclamation 'Tausend Schwerenot' (*Götz*, 8) in the very first scene is translated as 'Zounds!' (*Goetz*, 4), thus invoking the language of Shakespeare and Marlowe. Quotations from Shakespeare are absent in Scott's *Goetz of Berlichingen*, but one translation stands out as a Shakespearean borrowing. Once Weislingen has allied himself with Adelheid, at the end of Act II scene 5, Franz comments, 'Mir ist als wenn ich aus der Welt sollte', to which Weislingen replies: 'Mir auch, und noch darzu als wüßt ich nicht wohin' (*Götz*, 89). Scott translates Weislingen's answer with the words: 'And I—yet I—yet I know not wherefore' (*Goetz*, 72). Weislingen's 'wohin' suggests that he is uncertain as to the outcome of his actions, yet the term 'wherefore' in Scott's translation indicates a search for a reason. To this end, Scott's is a fairly gross mistranslation. Yet Scott does not have difficulty with the particle 'hin' elsewhere in *Götz*.

Expecting to find Shakespeare in Goethe's play, however, Scott falls upon Act II scene 2 of *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet utters: 'I have of late (but wherefore I know not) lost all my mirth'. Goethe's words are neither a borrowing from Shakespeare, nor are they taken from Christoph Martin Wieland's translation of *Hamlet* (1766), in which Hamlet's aside appears as 'warum weiß ich selbst nicht'.[32] Recognising that there are limits to the Shakespeareanism of Goethe's play, Scott supplies further resemblances. In doing so, he nudges *Götz* deeper into its English literary heritage. True to the recommended translation practice of Scott's friend and colleague – and erstwhile translator of Schiller's *Die Räuber* – Alexander Fraser Tytler, Scott seemingly domesticizes Goethe's language, rendering it unrecognisable as a foreign literary product. According to Tytler's influential *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (1791), good translations have 'all the ease' of the original text in the original language and therefore appear to be transparent.[33] Tytler suggests that 'a translator ought always to figure to himself, in what manner the original author would have expressed himself, if he had written in the language of the translation';[34] to which Scott answers by partially making Goethe express himself in the language of the masterpieces of English drama.

Reviewers of Scott's translation of *Götz* were barely in agreement about the degree to which Scott's translation or even the original bore any resemblance to the work of

[32] William Shakespeare, *Theatralische Werke*, trans. by Christoph Martin Wieland, 8 vols (Zurich: Orell, Geßner und Comp., 1762–66), VIII (1766), 85 (Act II, scene 6).

[33] Alexander Fraser Tytler, *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (London: Dent, 1907). See also Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 68.

[34] Tytler, *Essay on the Principles*, p. 107.

Shakespeare.[35] They do, however, foreground the foreignness of the original by presenting their readers with potted historical accounts of the period in which the original Götz lived; this in turn suggests that, to some, Goethe's work might have been prized more for its insights into historical customs – even if Goethe provides a fictionalized version of Götz's life – than for its literary merit. *Götz* gives a treatment of a historical juncture particular to the Holy Roman Empire in the years surrounding the Peasants' War of 1524–25.[36] Again, Scott makes some attempt to domesticize the foreign setting of Goethe's play. With his typically Tory take on historical events, Scott likens the events that unfolded in the Holy Roman Empire with the English Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and Jack Cade's Rebellion of 1450, claiming that they 'resembl[ed] in their nature, and in the atrocities committed by the furious insurgents, the rebellions of Tyler and Cade in England' (*Goetz*, xi).

Scott's brief comment on the similarity between these German and English domestic conflicts haphazardly papers over some of the dissimilarities between them.[37] But it is worth

[35] Compare, for example, the reviews in the following: *The Analytical Review; or, History of Literature, Domestic and Foreign*, 1 (June 1799), 609–13; and *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine; or, Monthly Political and Literary Censor*, 3 (July 1799), 297–301.

[36] For discussion of *Götz* in relation to the structural changes of its sixteenth-century setting, see, for example, Christa Fell, 'Justus Möser's Social Ideas as Mirrored in Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*', *Germanic Review*, 54 (1979), 98–103; Horst Lange, 'Wolves, Sheep, and the Shepherd: Legality, Legitimacy, and Hobbesian Political Theory in Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*', *Goethe Yearbook*, 10 (2001), 1–30; and Kenneth D. Weisinger, '*Götz von Berlichingen*: History Writing Itself', *German Studies Review*, 9 (1986), 211–32.

[37] While there are similarities in the economic and social conditions surrounding the 1381 rebellion and the German Peasants' War, the differences are greater than Scott acknowledges. The scale of neither English rebellion is comparable to that of the German conflict, whether

asking why Scott might be tempted to emphasize what they have in common. At a basic level, Scott is paying heed to his readers who might know little about German history and culture. Presenting readers with a comparison enables them to relate to matters from their own perspective. This offers one way of reading Scott's comment in a letter to Cadell and Davies in May 1798 in which he proposes a twelve-volume 'compendium of the Chefs d oeuvres [*sic*] of the German Stage', that '[m]any of the plays of Chivalry contain curious references to the feudal customs of Germany in the middle ages & [*sic*] these I must endeavour to illustrate by suitable notes.'[38] As the customs depicted in the *Ritterstücke* are from a distant time and place, Scott provides notes to help the reader understand them. His translation of *Götz*, however, is entirely devoid of notes. He compensates for this by including a preface giving a potted account of the period in which the action of *Götz* takes place, along with some explanation of the customs of the *Faustrecht*, *Fehdbriefe*, the legal status and privileges of nobles, and the

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in terms of economic or human costs or with regard to the severity of atrocities committed. Moreover, while a direct outcome of the 1381 revolt was some degree of positive legal reform to the status of the rural peasantry, the 1524-25 war resulted in further suppression of the same class. See, for example, Peter Blickle, *Die Revolution von 1525* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975). On the English 1381 Peasants' Revolt, see Rodney Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (London: Routledge, 1973). František Graus, 'From Resistance to Revolt: The Late Medieval Peasant Wars in the Context of Social Crisis', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 3 (1975), 1–9; Ellwood E. Mather III, 'Panicked Peasants, Pompous Prelates and Passing Gas: A Brief Survey of Tax Revolts in the Middle Ages', *The Social Science Journal*, 33 (1996), 89–95; and David Sabean, 'The Communal Basis of Pre-1800 Peasant Uprisings in Western Europe', *Comparative Politics*, 8 (1976), 355–64 offer some comparative accounts.

[38] Scott to Cadell and Davies, 5 May 1798, p. 121.

Vehmgericht. These customs – with the possible exception of the latter, perhaps known to some London theatregoers from James Boaden's *The Secret Tribunal*, performed at the Theatre Royal in 1795 – would have been alien to a domestic readership. Their discussion in Scott's preface aids readers in making sense of this curious situation in which German barons act with brazen disregard for the sovereignty of state institutions. It is an entirely different rhetorical position, however, to offer an analogy, as Scott does in comparing the Peasants' War with the Peasants' Revolt and Jack Cade's Rebellion: here his use of analogy is seemingly unnecessary in making sense of the German situation.

Another analogy between two distinct historical customs is found in Scott's 1797 translation of Maier's *Fust von Stromberg*. In the first scene of *Fust von Stromberg*, Volrath warns Artimes that he may soon be punished for knowing the abbot's secret; Volrath has seen 'das gewöhnliche Henkermahl' laid out, 'womit der Vogt die einmauren läßt, welche seinen Absichten schaden können.'[39] In his 144-page appendix of notes on the customs of the period in which the play is set (c. 1100), Maier does not include any material on the historical practice of immurement. Scott, however, appends a note:

> This cruel mode of punishment was often inflicted in Convents. In puling [*sic*] down the walls of the ancient Abbey of Coldingham in Berwickshire the bones of a poor wretch were found built into the wall who had probably sufferd [*sic*] this inhuman death. [40]

[39] Jacob Maier, *Fust von Stromberg. Ein Schauspiel in Fünf Aufzügen. Mit den Sitten Gebräuchen und Rechten sines Jahrhunderts* (Mannheim: Schwann, 1782), pp. 11–12.

[40] Walter Scott (trans.), *Wolfred of Sromberg* [*sic*]. *A Drama of Chivalry from the German of Maier*, MS Abbotsford Library – N.3.11, blank page facing p. 11.

In Scott's time, immurement would have been seen as an outdated and barbaric custom, left in the realm of medieval history and literary imagination. It features in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, which scandalized readers with its sexualized and barbaric scenes when it was published in 1796. This note may, therefore, be superfluous in making German customs accessible to British readers. Again, he includes a note describing the 'bier-right', referred to by Fust in Act II scene 3:

> It was a superstition ~~all~~ currently received in all parts of Europe that the corpse of a Murderd person bled afreshd upon being touchd by the Murderer. In Germany a part of their judicial Enquiry was founded upon it, + calld the Bierright- The body was laid on the bier and the suspected person was obliged to put his finger into its mouth, if the blood gushed he was held ~~in~~ guilty, otherwise innocent. In the shocking case of ~~the~~ Stanfield murderd by his own Son at Haddington, it remains upon records of our Justiciary Court as part of the evidence against the parricide that the Corpse of his father bled as he approached it. [*sic*][41]

Scott's comment helps him explain something that is spelled out in the original text but not in his translation. He omits Fust's naming of the custom, 'der Mörder konnte das Bahr-Recht nicht aushalten!',[42] instead presenting only Fust's description of it happening before his very eyes some years before.[43] Again, however, cruentation was not unknown in Britain: not only

[41] Ibid., blank page facing p. 30.

[42] Maier, *Fust von Stromberg*, p. 38.

[43] Scott (trans.), *Wolfred of Sromberg* [*sic*], p. 30.

did the case cited by Scott occur as recently as 1688, but Lady Anne refers to the practice in Act I scene 2 of *Richard III*.[44] Scott's note may, therefore, again be unnecessary.

The examples from *Fust von Stromberg* have a bearing on Scott's allusion to Tyler and Cade in his preface to *Goetz*. In the cases of cruentation and immurement, Scott takes a practice shrouded in superstition and pseudoscience that might seem at a remove from British culture and better-suited to the gothic mores of foreign 'Germans'; and he presents a concrete example of how and when each custom was also practised in Britain. Scott emphasizes that Britain and the German-speaking world are not only akin in terms of their literary forebears but also in the historical development of their people's belief systems and legal procedures.

Prefacing a new edition of his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–03) in 1830, Scott writes about his initial encounter with German literature over three decades previously. Thanks to the linguistic similarities between the two, he had the pleasure of 'the unexpected discovery of an old friend in a foreign land'.[45] He claimed at that point to have used his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and Scottish dialects to piece together the meaning of German.[46] Scott was not always complimentary about the German character throughout his life. As early

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[44] For a brief historical consideration of the practice of cruentation, see Robert P. Brittain, 'Cruentation in Legal Medicine and Literature', *Medical History*, 9 (1965), 82–88.

[45] Scott, 'Essay on Imitations', p. 65, n. 1.

[46] Ibid., p. 42. Fritz Sommerkamp questions the truth of Scott's claim, as the person from whom Scott learned Anglo-Saxon had only been born in 1779. See Fritz Sommerkamp, 'Walter Scotts Kenntnis und Ansicht von deutscher Literatur', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 148 (1925), 196–206 (p. 196). Scott's 'Commonplace Book' from the period between 1792 and 1803 shows, however, that he had been studying the relationships between the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Moesogothic, and German scripts in the early 1790s. See National Library of Scotland MS.1568, pp. 8–9.

as 1806, Scott describes the Germans as 'lachrymose' and 'philosophizing';[47] and later on in his journal in 1829 he writes that they are 'apt to exhaust themselves in speculation'.[48] However, in his forays into reading and translating German drama in the late 1790s, he discovers something about the supposed German character that resembles an old friend. Scott's 'Essay on the Drama' of 1819 demonstrates his awareness that the 'different temper of the nations' of France and Germany guided their theatrical traditions in opposing directions.[49] That the Germans were led towards Shakespeare would help Scott to prove his point: not only were their historical customs similar to those of Britain; so too were their historical and present disposition comparable with those of the British, even if in an exaggerated form.

Much as Lessing had recommended sixty years before, in 1819 Scott suggests that the possibilities for cultural renewal and regeneration come from adopting aspects of literatures that have some appeal to indigenous national characteristics. Thus the 'fresh turning up of the soil' that was 'absolutely necessary to the renovation of [British] literary culture' was, in Scott's eyes, to come from nowhere else but the German-speaking world.[50] German literature and the German character were, however, viewed with suspicion by conservative critics in the late 1790s and early 1800s, particularly as a result of the craze for the works of August von Kotzebue. Faced with this, Scott recognized the need to foreground the literary, historical,

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[47] Walter Scott, 'On "The Miseries of Human Life"', in *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 28 vols (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1834–36), XIX (1835), 139–59 (pp. 140–41).

[48] Walter Scott, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott, From the Original Manuscript at Abbotsford*, ed. by David Douglas, 2 vols (New York: Harper, 1891), II, 256.

[49] Walter Scott, 'Essay on the Drama', in *Miscellaneous Prose*, VI (1834), 217–395 (p. 383).

[50] Ibid., p. 381. See also Scott, 'Essay on Imitations', pp. 35–41.

and temperamental fraternity between Germany and Britain. Using the translator's prerogative to 'pave the way' for the formation of public opinion on another culture,[51] Scott readies the soil himself. Current theories of 'World Literature' and indigenous cultural renewal emphasize the role played by discovering difference and newness in another's culture and keeping in step with it.[52] Drama and theatre are often overlooked in such processes, being instead accorded a particularly precarious status in how we are confronted with alien customs.[53] Yet in this case we identify a circularity in which German cultural development draws on English literary traditions before this development is called upon to help fuel the regeneration of British literary culture. And in this case drama was a means to power both intercultural understanding and intracultural renewal in turn. While Lessing, Herder, and others recognized the cultural similarities between Germany and Britain through the drama of Shakespeare, Scott noticed these similarities through the works of contemporary

[51] Peter Boerner, 'National Images and Their Place in Literary Research: Germany as Seen by Eighteenth-Century French and English Reading Audiences', *Monatshefte*, 67 (1975), 358–70 (p. 362).

[52] See, for example, Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by M.B. Debevoise (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2004); Itamar Even-Zohar, 'Laws of Literary Interference', *Poetics Today*, 11 (1990), 53–72; and Id., 'Translation Theory Today. A Call for Transfer Theory', *Poetics Today*, 2 (1981), 1–7.

[53] See, for example, David Damrosch, *How to Read World Literature* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 47; and Gershom Shaked, 'The Play: Gateway to Cultural Dialogue', in *The Play Out of Context. Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*, ed. by Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 7–24 (p. 18).

German dramatists – foremost among them Goethe; and Scott wanted his readers to notice them too.

Michael Wood is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. His research interests include German drama and theatre, Anglo-German literary exchange, and international processes of cultural development. He is the author of *Heiner Müller's Democratic Theater: The Politics of Making the Audience Work* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2017).